

## THE UNRULY TONGUE.

A Life Lesson.  
Look you, Miss Palmer! If you stick yourself in the way again when Mr. Allen is here you'll be likely to get your walking-papers. Don't flatter yourself with the idea that you are a necessary fixture here. Because your father happened to be my father's cousin is no reason why you should put on airs. Don't answer me! I only ask you to keep out of my way, and especially do you keep out of Mr. Allen's way. There! Go! You know what I mean.

And with this Irene Minturn swept proudly on her way thereby running into the arms of her mother, who had entered the room while she had been speaking.

Irene Minturn was a young lady of two-and-twenty; tall and shapely, with a face certainly handsome; hair dark and glossy; eyes large and full, with a fiery snap in their changeable lights; the other features of stately regularity; the one prominent characteristic present in every look and tone being pride.

Her mother was a small, meek-faced woman, proud of her queenly daughter, and by her governed in many things.

Lizzie Palmer—just now called Miss Palmer by Irene—was a blue-eyed, golden-haired girl of nineteen; rather below the medium height of woman, but of perfect form; light and graceful with bounding health and vigor in ever motion and in every tone, as well as in the hearty ring of her genuine laughter. Her face was a study. An artist looking for some special type of beauty for his canvas if he sought only beauty would never select her; but if he wanted a face for a Pandora, thinking more of character than of outlined beauty, or did he seek a face that should typify love, to be loved in return, then he would have looked no further.

Lizzie was a sort of Cinderella in the merchant's family. In the other years, when she had been but a child her father had been Mr. Minturn's partner in business. They were own cousins—Minturn and Palmer,—and had entered into business on equal footing. At the end of a dozen years they had failed, but the failure had not been at all disgraceful. The failure of Western firms, deeply indebted to them had brought them down, and forced them to make the best settlement they could, and they had been able to offer a settlement that was accepted; so that their were once again free to enter into business in their own names.

The shock of the failure, however, had proved too much for Thomas Palmer. Never very strong, the shame and chagrin on account of the business collapse had so far worked upon his sensitive nature that his life paid the penalty. He passed away while the plans for renewal of business were being discussed, and on his dying bed he had left one solemn trust to his friend and partner; and that was his child, Lizzie, then ten years of age. His wife had been dead four years, at that time, and his darling daughter was all he had left on earth, of his own kin and kind, to love. Almost the last words he had spoken to his partner were those that placed Lizzie in his charge.

And Minturn had promised, solemnly, that he would not fail to watch over her.

So Thomas Palmer had died content. He had left his child in hands which he believed could not fail; and had no more to ask.

Nine years have passed away since that time. James Minturn went into the new business shortly after the death of his former partner, and he has been prospering in every way. In short, he has become a wealthy man. But—how has he kept faith with Thomas Palmer? How do we find the child that the dying father left in his care and keeping?

Still, if there has been failure, the blame may not all be laid on him. He has but little to do with his home. Nor can the blame be laid on his wife, for she is naturally a good hearted woman, and would have treated Lizzie as a child of her own, had not her own child prevented.

Aye—her own child—Irene Minturn.

Upon her shoulders must rest the blame for Lizzie's treatment; and we are forced to declare that the treatment had supposed it would be. Lizzie Palmer knew very well what Mr. Minturn had promised her father; she remembered how the strong, well merchant had held her in his arms, and kissed her, and promised to make her life pleasant, so far as he could. And she knew how the promise had failed of its fulfillment; but she had no blame in her heart for Mr. Minturn. In short and in truth, she blamed nobody. She sorrowed in her sufferings, and pitied Irene for the smallness of her of her nature and the hardness of her heart. She knew that Irene's jealous disposition was the source of all her trouble; and she felt she would rather bear than to carry in her bosom the

feelings that prompted her foster-sister. We saw Irene stumble into her mother's arms.

"O, my child! my child! the mother cried, when the other girl had disappeared; "why will you not curb that unruly tongue of yours? Why should you speak to Lizzie in that manner? Since when have you come to call her 'Miss Palmer'? Irene, as sure as you live, evil, and only evil, can come of such a tongue. You know that Lizzie would not willingly cross your path in any way."

"Mamma, I wish you wouldn't preach. I shall talk to Lizzie Palmer just as she deserves. Why did she stick her self into Charles Allen's way last evening?"

"Irene, pleaded the mother, with all the persuasion she could command, "I would not uphold Lizzie in any wrong and you know it. When she came into the hall last evening she had no idea that she was to meet Charles Allen there. In fact, I do not think she knew he was in the house."

"Oh! you needn't tell me that! You don't know how much duplicity the little mix can carry beneath that pink-and-white complexion of hers. Mamma, don't you want me to marry with Charles Allen?"

My dear child, the mother replied with extraordinary energy, that event is the dearest wish of my life. When I can see you the willing wife of Charles Allen I shall be content, so far as you, earthly interests are concerned. I do not think of his wealth of gold and silver—though it is far, beyond the wealth of your father—as much as I do of his wealth of mind, of character, his standing in society, and his good name wherever he is known. My daughter, I cannot tell you how anxious I am that you should be his wife; but—and here Mrs. Minturn laid a finger upon her daughter's lips, with a significant shake of the head, as she proceeded—Irene, should Charles Allen once hear that tongue of yours as I heard it but a few moments since, he would turn from you in fear and trembling.

At this the girl laughed—noisy, grating laugh—and with a snap of her fingers, she waited away, singing:

I'll not marry you my pretty maid.

Nobody asked you to, sir, she said.

While her mother with another sad and dispirited shake of the head, went her way.

My dear young lady, what is the matter? Have you met with an accident? Can I assist you in any way?

Lizzie Palmer was sitting in the small, vine-clad arbor in the garden, weeping bitterly, when these words fell upon her ear; and on looking up she beheld—Charles Allen.

No, no, she answered, as soon as she could sufficiently control her emotions. I have met with no accident. I am very foolish,—I was thinking,—thinking,—and O! forget it, sir. There! I will weep no more.

Instead of going away, however, the young man sat down by her side. No wonder was it that Irene Minturn wanted him for her husband; and we cannot wonder that her mother had praised him; for he was, truly, all that the most fastidious maiden could have desired in a partner for life. He was five-and-twenty years of age, tall and symmetrical of form, with dark gray eyes, brilliant and expressive, and a face of the very highest type of manly beauty. His father, dying, had left him not only in possession of a large fortune, but of a large and flourishing business as well—a business which was prospering more and more under his card and supervision. He was known to be the very soul of honor, and honorable men loved to deal with him.

Pardon me, Miss Palmer, for the liberty I have taken; but I saw you as you came into the garden, and having an earnest desire to as a few questions I seized the opportunity. Am I pardoned?

She looked up into his frank, manly face, and the smile she there met called an answering smile from herself, a smile that wreathed her ruby lips and danced brightly in her azure eyes. The smile was pardon enough, and he went on:

I wanted to ask you if you were ever with your father spending a time—fay weeks, perhaps—at the old Fabyan House, near the foot of Mount Washington?

A surprised look came to the girl's beautiful face.

Yes, she said quickly. It was the last time I ever went away with papa. He went to that mountain region hoping to benefit his health; but, alas! it did not save him. A brief pause, and then she added:

O, yes, I remember it well. I was almost ten years old.

And have you forgotten the tearing, noisy boy who tried to teach you how to ride one of those mountain ponies?

A bright light flashed across Lizzie's face. Aye,—she remembered it perfectly. She gave a searching glance into the face of her companion, and said:

O! it comes back to me now. Yes, and you were the boy of that time!

Yes. I was there with my father, and he, too, was in search of health; a health—alas! which he was never more to regain.

It was a pleasant chat that followed. Allen had forgotten the name of the bright-eyed, sunny-faced little girl with whom he had enjoyed so much at the mountains; but the first time he saw her face in Mr. Minturn's hall he had been wonderfully impressed by it.

"And, he said, 'last evening when I met you in the hall a second time the full remembrance came to me, and I resolved to know the truth.'

Then he explained further how he had chanced to see her in the garden at this present time. He had called to speak with Miss Minturn about a party which they were to attend that evening.

"I had done my errand, he went on, 'and in passing the door opening on to the rear piazza, I thought I would slip out into the garden and pluck a rose-bud for my button-hole. I did so and saw you; and I am thankful that I came. I love to cherish the blessed memories of childhood, and surely the memory we have revived is a pleasant one.

Before he went away he found a pretty rosebud, which he persuaded Lizzie to pin into his button-hole. If her hands trembled while she did it we cannot wonder.

A week later—on the seventh day after that meeting in the garden—just as the shades of evening were falling, Charles Allen and Lizzie Palmer again met in the great hall. He had just come from the drawing room where he had been conferring with Mrs. Minturn and Irene about the opera, to which he had promised to take them, and when he had taken his hat from the tree the thought struck him that there was light enough left in the garden to enable him to select a rosebud—he was a dear lover of roses—and he turned to the rear door for that purpose just as she, coming up from the kitchen below, had arrived at that point.

He was evidently surprised upon beholding this young lady—an adopted child of the wealthy merchant—habited in a garb of toil, like any common servant girl. He knew the whole story of her adoption by Mr. Minturn, as that man himself had told it; and he knew a certain fact which, perhaps, Mr. Minturn would have told him. He knew that there had been paid into Mr. Minturn's hands, since Mr. Palmer's death, more than ten thousand dollars on account of the old firm. So he wondered at seeing the beautiful young girl in the garb of Cinderella.

Presently Irene came out into the hall, and found Lizzie standing there with tears trickling down her cheeks.

Ha! Didn't I hear you speaking with Mr. Allen?

The poor girl's look, as she wiped away her tears, was answer enough.

And what are you sniveling at? What are you crying about?

O! Irene, the girl exclaimed, with a burst of anguish, it cut me deeply to have Mr. Allen find me in this garb of drudgery, at this hour of the day!

Bargain! Sneaking, good for nothing pauper! What did I tell you? There! Take that! I'll teach you to lie in wait for that man every time he comes here! And as she spoke, she gave the shrinking girl a blow upon the cheek with the flat of her hand, that staggered her.

At that moment Mrs. Minturn came out, and Lizzie fled away to her own chamber, leaving mother and daughter to themselves.

But there had been another witness of the scene. Charles Allen had found his rose; and, on his way back had reached the piazza, when, glancing through the glass door, he had seen Irene come out from the rear drawing room. At sight of her he stopped, simply to wait until she had passed; and thus he was an unwilling witness to the scene that followed. Realizing then that Irene believed him to be gone, and with a heart to meet any one of the family he slipped back into the garden, and made his exit by scaling the wall.

That evening Charles Allen came, with his own carriage, and accompanied Mrs. Minturn and Irene to the opera but it was a chilly, comfortless affair. He was suffering all that disgust and bitterness can cause a man to suffer, while they were deeply ruffled in spirit by a remembrance of the passage in the hall.

On the next day Charles Allen called upon Mr. Minturn, at his counting room, and asked for a private conference. With the doors closed, and the keys turned in the locks he told the old merchant that any thought of marriage between himself and Irene must be put away forever. And then to the disappointed, chagrined old man, he told frankly, his story—told how he had for a long time feared that Irene's unruly tongue would make him miserable if she were his wife; and then, of the scene he had witnessed on the previous evening.

At first Mr. Minturn was inclined

to be angry, but the young man's manner was so calm, so dignified and so entirely manly, and moreover there was so much right on his side, that he could not do else than bow in humble submission. There was a lengthy conversation; but that was its sum and substance. Finally, something that fell from Allen's lips caused the old merchant to look up with a start.

Ah! Do you think of looking to Lizzie Palmer her hand in marriage? The young man raised himself proudly erect as he answered:

Yes, sir,—if she will have me. But, sir,—the thought never occurred to me—not a shadow of such a possibility, until the event of the past evening.

You have thought rapidly, it seems to me! Minturn said, with a spice of irony in look and tone.

Thoughts, Mr. Minturn, are the creatures of a moment. But I must tell you, I have known that young lady longer than you think. I spent two or three weeks in her society, at the White Mountains, nine years ago, shortly before her father's death.

But little more was said, when Charles Allen arose and took his hat. He stood for a moment, hat in hand, and then rested a finger upon his friend's shoulder.

"Mr. Minturn, as yet I have spoken no word to Miss Palmer of that of which we have spoken; but I shall do so; and I shall look to you to protect her from suffering on my account. You know what I mean. And, sir, one word more. His voice sank to a whisper, as he added:

"If you have any business matters to settle with Miss Palmer—matters relating to the business of yourself and her father,—you will find it very much easier to settle with my wife, than with any one else."

And with this he left the counting-room,—left the old merchant looking like a man who had been stricken a heavy blow.

Mr. Minturn went to his home that evening sober and thoughtful. His wife and daughter asked him what was the matter, but he would not tell them. Later, however, he let fall this remark—something had been said about Lizzie Palmer, and Irene had spoken of her as one who lived upon their charity.

"Hush!" he said, raising his hand warningly. "Over and above all claims upon Lizzie Palmer for moneys expended in her behalf, I am indebted to her more than ten thousand dollars—money that would have been her father's, had he lived. Let me hope that you will not make her uncomfortable. It would come hard upon me should I be called upon to pay over to her that sum at the present time.

This was on the evening of Thursday. On the evening of the next day Mrs. Minturn and Irene were out on a visiting expedition. Charles Allen called, and asked to see Miss Palmer. She came to him in the drawing-room.

A great deal was said on that occasion. Charles told over again the story of those happy weeks at the White Mountains, and by and by he took from his bosom a faded rose-bud—the bud which she had pinned into the button-hole of his coat in the garden—and he frankly confessed that while she had been pinning it there the feeling had come to him that the love of the boy was being renewed in a deeper and more significant love. And shall we wonder that he drew a confession from her very nearly like unto it?

Suffice it to say, at the end of an hour her head was pillowed upon his bosom, his strong arms holding her fast, love confessed, and truth plighted. On the Sunday evening following Mr. Minturn came into the drawing-room where his wife and daughter were sitting. As he sank into his great easy-chair he said, his voice tinged with both bitterness and pain:

"Well, Irene, that ugly disposition of yours manifest in an unruly tongue, has frightened away another lover. I have just given to Charles Allen the hand of my ward—Lizzie Palmer.

Irene shut her teeth and clenched her hands. The blow was terrible, but she would not acknowledge it. The name of Lizzie Palmer was upon her lips, coupled with something very much like a curse.

"No, no," said her mother, resolutely. "Do not blame Lizzie. It was yourself that drove away a very jewel among men. Ah! that unruly tongue!"

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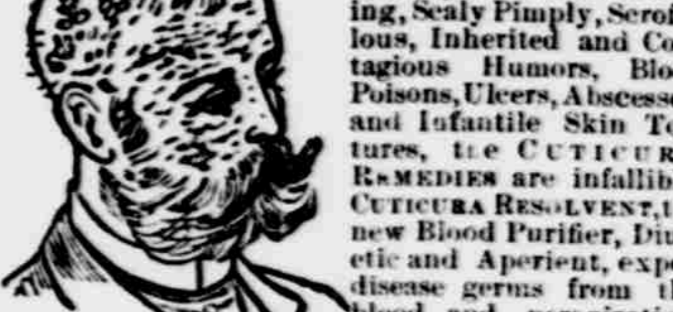
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